Dowler (Be—)

RESEARCHES,

UPON THE

NECROPOLIS

OF

NEW ORLEANS,

WITH BRIEF ALLUSIONS TO ITS VITAL ARITHMETIC.

By BENNET DOWLER, M. D.,
OF NEW ORLEANS.

"*Truth is the Whole.*"—HEGEL.

NEW ORLEANS:
PRINTED BY BILLS & CLARK, 68 CAMP STREET.

1850.

NECROPOLIS

OR

NEW ORLEANS.

WITH BRIEF ALLUSIONS TO ITS YOUNG ANCESTRY, ETC.

BY HENRIETT DOWLER, M. D.,

OF NEW ORLEANS.

NEW ORLEANS:

PRINTED BY ELLIS & CLARK, 68 CAMP STREET.

1850.

RESEARCHES

UPON THE

NECROPOLIS

OF

NEW ORLEANS.

With Brief Allusions To Its Vital Arithmetic

By **BENNET DOWLER, M. D.**
OF NEW ORLEANS.

I.—*Researches upon the Necropolis of New Orleans, with brief allusions to its vital Arithmetic.* By Bennet Dowler, M. D., of New Orleans.

Having ascertained, in 1840, from personal inspection of the inscriptions in the cemeteries of New Orleans, the ages of a great number of persons buried therein, taken without picking or selection, in series of thirty each, always in a different, often in a remote part from the preceding series, and continued from week to week, until a sufficient number of data had been accumulated for numerical analysis, I now propose to give the results of that inquiry, which, in the absence of exact registries of births, deaths, and ages, may be valuable in determining approximatively the duration of life, and also, to a considerable extent, the sanitary history of the climate, not deeming it expedient, at present, to give even a summary of other data which I may possess confirmatory or illustrative of the subject, though a few brief allusions to vital statistics not lying within the limitary principles or methodology here adopted, may be proper: So that these grave-yard statistics may not be alto-

gether amenable to Dr. Faust's animadversions, namely: "Instead of animated nature, for which God made man, thou hast nought around thee but skeletons and dead men's bones, in smoke and mould."

The necrological inscriptions in the different cemeteries of New Orleans, are not only illustrative of its vital history and sanitary perturbations, but are also, to a considerable extent, characteristic and peculiar.

The Ideal of vital statistics, as a method, presents sundry conceptions, as absolutely true, in advance of empirical processes, and their actual results in relation to both the statics and dynamics of population.—But how clear so ever the theoretical principle may be, its useful application is alone to be found in the experimental.

For scientific purposes, the facts of vital research and reasoning must be numerous, continuous, and must extend through long cycles of time. The most accurate record comprehending the history of every individual in existence for one year, or one dozen of years, would utterly fail to solve some of the most important vital problems, which, anterior to experience, and its results, are known to be solvable and within the legitimate range of empirical possibility. Synthetical reasoning determines in advance of experience that the mean duration of life, in a country, can be inferred from a record of the ages of all the natives dying within its limits. The record for one entire generation would not only show the exact duration of the mean life for that period, but in connexion with a sufficient number of similar, previous records, would indicate with slight and unimportant variations, the mean duration and expectation of life for succeeding generations. In the science of population, however, a generation commencing at a given era, would not be complete as a vital cycle, until the last individual then living, shall die; for example, individuals born in 1850, may not die until the twenty-first century of the Christian era. Dr. Dunglison mentions, that Washington's nurse, a negress, was living, in 1835, at the age of 168 years. T. Parr lived to 152, and Henry Jenkins to 169. These and other examples show, that persons born in 1850, may live to A. D. 2059; at which time, say a thousand millions, or the whole of the present population of the world will have died. The aggregate of their ages divided by the whole number of the individuals, will give the mean duration of life, as well as the maximum, and minimum ages.

Without any regard to the actual census, suppose the fixed creole and acclimated population of New Orleans to be one hundred thousand, and that immigration and emigration be wholly arrested—suppose four children to be born, and four persons to die annually for every one hundred inhabitants, then the population will be stationary, without increase or decrease, and how much so ever individual ages may differ, the average life will be twenty-five years. But in case only two die in the hundred, the births being undiminished, the population will increase annually two in the hundred, or for the city two thousand; the whole number of births will be four thousand, and the whole number of deaths two thousand; then the average life will be double—will be fifty, instead of twenty-five years; suppose that during the year, one hun-

dred thousand persons come temporarily into the city, and lose two in every hundred—all the survivors returning home, then the deaths and births will be equal—the average life will seem to be reduced to twenty-five, and the increase neutralised—all of these conclusions, would be necessarily false for want of correct data, comprehending all the essential elements entering into the numerical process, static and dynamic.

Although four births and four deaths annually, for every 100 persons, would cause the population to be stationary and the mean life to be 25, yet, with respect to the latter, a single year might give a result altogether different, and so of a very limited number of years; thus one dying aged 100, another 50, a third 20, and a fourth 10, the average might be double that which has been named. But in a period sufficiently prolonged, such excesses would be reduced or equalized. In tossing a dollar in the air, the same side might fall uppermost for several consecutive times, but, if the operation be continued sufficiently long, this marked inequality disappears forever. The same principle prevails in vital statistics, as well in numerical medicine.

There are, indeed, a great many elementary questions which it is desirable or necessary to consider, in order to arrive at satisfactory conclusions concerning the vital condition of New Orleans.

What is the annual mean number of the resident creole and acclimated population? What is the annual mean number of strangers, and time of their temporary residence? What is the mean number of births, deaths, and ages of each class, not to mention internal and external relations, topographical, ethnographical, physiological, sanitary, industrial, pecuniary, educational, moral, religious, social, civil, in the white, black, red, and mixed races?

It has become fashionable to regard New Orleans as "The Wet Grave-Yard," the aceldama of the South, and little more than a vast Necropolis. Battalions of serried figures mustered into service by some able Æsculapian Generals, have been already advanced in support of this position, with the very best intentions, it is believed, namely, to defend the truth at all hazzards, without those biases, to which the commercial interest give rise. When the citizens of New Orleans themselves admit that their own city is the most insalubrious upon the face of the earth, with a ratio of mortality three times greater than Boston, not to mention Berlin or Bergen, it may be presumed that they are fully convinced of the truth of what they promulgate, inasmuch, as the temptation to suppress truths of such a disagreeable character, is very great. Self slander is rarer than self murder. The *amor patriæ*, self love, self interest, and local attachment often give rise to a fatal and incurable nostalgia or home sickness, but never to home-hatred. Thus in some of the Swiss regiments in the service of France, it was observed that the inordinate love of home or nostalgia, caused death, and desertion,

and was sometimes excited by the playing of certain Swiss airs, which were, therefore, forbidden under pain of Death.*

Does the traveller inquire concerning the salubrity of a neighborhood? How sickly so ever the locality may be, its inhabitants give it a favorable character, but candidly acknowledge that certain other places, at some distance, are unhealthy ; but on reaching these sickly spots, the same questions will elicit similar answers. While voyaging upon the Illinois river, in the spring of 1836, I witnessed a most violent altercation between a Senator and a Physician, strangers to each other. The latter was hastening back to the East, after having explored the western part of the State of Illinois—a portion which, he pronounced unhealthy. This position happened to be within the Senatorial jurisdiction of the former,—whereupon, the Senator considered the matter as a personal affront. Had the steamboat not have been under way, a duel would probably have been fought. Having examined the same neighborhood, a few days previously, I could testify that the doctor's report was not libellous, but true ; indeed, the Senator's constituents were very familiar with intermittents, and carried upon their pale, sallow countenances *prima facie* evidence of bad health.

Dr. Daniel Drake, an acute observer, informed me during his excursions through the western and southern States, a few years ago, that, when passing through districts where fevers, agues, and other epidemics prevailed, the people generally denied the unhealthiness of their own particular locality, but admitted the prevalence of sickness in the surrounding neighborhoods ; but, when he inquired in the latter places, they referred him to the former or some more distant spot.

Although it is altogether foreign to the purposes and limits of this paper, to give even a summary of such facts as I may possess in relation to the climate of New Orleams, yet, as already indicated, I will make a few occasional remarks upon a portion of its vital arithmetic, or rather upon the *prestige* of figures which are supposed to prove its unexampled mortality.

Without affirming or denying the comparative salubrity of New Orleans—without questioning the axiom that figures cannot lie, and with a full reliance on the good faith in which these facts and figures have been recently reported, I may venture to examine anew their true import, and the justness of the conclusions advanced. Æsop's reasoning is worth remembering: He having been directed to procure the best things in the market for a dinner party, bought nothing but tongues, which offended his master, who, thereupon, told him next time to get the worst articles ; but he brought tongues again, affirming that the tongue, was, according to the use made of it, the best and yet the worst thing known.

---

* "The entrepid Swiss who treads a foreign shore,
Condemned to climb his mountain cliffs no more,
If chance he hear the song so sweetly wild,
Which on those cliffs his infant hours beguiled,
Melts at the long lost scenes that round him rise,
And sinks a martyr to repentant sighs."

Figures are like tongues, at once the best and the worst things in the scientific mart. For they may be, sometimes, arranged apparently in the simplest and fairest manner, so as to prove New Orleans the most insalubrious city on earth, even though it may be in itself, the least so of any place known. If emigrants from northern climates were to enjoy as good health in New Orleans, as in their own countries, yet, from the dynamics of population, the ratio of mortality would from the nature of the case be high, as will be explained in the sequel, after having analyzed the necrological data found in the cemeteries of this city.

By the general custom of mankind—one not only in accordance with good taste, but with sanitary requirements, the dead are consigned to the ground—"earth to earth." But in New Orleans a different method of sepulture prevails. In most of the cemeteries, interment in the ground is wholly interdicted, elevated vaults and tombs only being used. The necessity of this method of entombment, for all who can afford the expense, is easily explained by referring to the topography of the city. A grave in any of the cemeteries, is lower than the adjacent swamps, and from ten to fifteen feet lower than the level of the river, so that it fills speedily with water, requiring to be bailed out before it is fit to receive the coffin, while, during heavy rains it is subject to complete inundation. The great Bayou cemetery is, sometimes, so completely inundated, that inhumation becomes impossible, until after the subsidence of the water, the dead bodies accumulating in the mean while. I have watched the bailing out of the grave, the floating of the coffin, and have heard the friends of the deceased deplore this mode of interment. A young Irish woman on seeing her husband's coffin lowered into a grave of welling water, exclaimed, repeatedly, "Oh Mike, it is a dear burying to you, to be buried at the Bayou! Oh that you should come to this!" It is this feeling that has built the different cemeteries which constitute the great Necropolis of New Orleans. Interest, to say nothing of the vanity of friends, requires inscriptions, in order to identify a vault, which is private property, purchased under a written title or conveyance. Hence these monumental inscriptions, from their constancy, accuracy, and number, afford data, which in the absence of exact registers, are probably, more trustworthy and valuable than can be found in any other existing necropolis. These necrological monuments, which necessity, pride, interest, and affection have reared, and which will augment from generation to generation, must, hereafter, prove more useful to the vital historian than the pyramids of Egypt, or the countless millions so carefully embalmed and deposited in the catacombs of that country, forty centuries ago. The ethnologist, might even now, commence his lesson among the tombs. The caucasian is separated from the negro race. In some cemeteries, the Irish, in some the German, in some the Anglo-American, in some the French type predominates.

The monumental evidence to be offered in this monograph in relation to the salubrity of the city and the length of life, compared with other places, is doubtlessly imperfect. The principal objection to

which it is liable, appears to be this; namely, very young children may not have had inscriptions on their vaults, as constantly as adults; though this hypothesis may be incorrect. But admitting that it is true, this source of error is neutralized, it may be supposed, by an undeniable fact, that, in all the cemeteries, even those which reflect the creole life most truly, as the Catholic, strangers, victims to the climate who "lived not half their days," are buried, and being counted, tend to shorten the average life, probably as much, as the supposed omission of infantile inscriptions, tends to enhance it. The evidence, upon the whole, if not demonstrative, possesses probability, and is offered for what it is worth—no more.

The grave-yard statistics which follow, may present results much more favorable than those afforded by the report of the Board of Health, for 1849. Hence it is proper to offer a few illustrative arguments which may explain the low average life reported by the Board, compared with that derived from inscriptions. The report relates in every case to a later period, during which immigration, and the causes of death have been most active. My observations relate to a period not only anterior to, but often very remote from that referred to by the Board.

One of the dynamical laws of population, which, after a most laborious analysis of the decennial census of 1840, I have deduced, may serve to explain the shortness of the mean life which the Board announces from very recent data.

The law referred to, shows that in the geographical distribution of ages, there is a tendency to throw into the West and South-West, an undue proportion of the young, among whom the causes of death are the most active. This must tend to reduce the average age. For, how infirm and unproductive so ever, the old may be, they contribute in a marked degree to extend the average life. Thus four children dying aged one year, will, by means of one centenarian dying at the same time, have a mean life of 20.8 years each.

If I mistake not, the explanation of this dynamical law is to be sought for in the economy of immigration, which tends to leave the aged, in their native land, as physically disqualified for the hardships incidental to new countries, new climates, and new enterprizes. The immature class of emigrants, that is, the infantile, is not repelled, as in the case of the aged, since it is not doomed to hopeless decline and increasing disability. Hence, the British Government offers a free passage to emigrants to Australia, with support for ten days after landing, on the condition that they shall be adults and shall be able to labor and shall not be more than thirty-five years old. The internal immigration in the United States, including that from foreign countries, flows to the west and to the south-west, and comprehends an unusual proportion of young fathers, mothers, and children, who, oppressed with cares, poverty, and augmenting numbers, resign, in a great degree the pleasures of society, for a home in the wilderness, or a temporary residence in southern towns, where labor is rewarded with double or triple wages.

By the census of 1840, Michigan, Iowa, and Wisconsin, the centres in which the lines of migration converged most powerfully, had nearly twice as many children under five years of age, as Connecticut, in proportion to the entire population. Michigan had one in every 5.58—Iowa, one in 5.96, and Wisconsin one in every 5.07; while Connecticut had but one in 8.09—Rhode Island one in 7.74, and Massachusetts one in 7.87, of this class.

If this hypothesis be correct, it will go far towards explaining the unusual proportion of centenarians in Charleston, as ascertained both by the census and the bills of mortality. It is probable that the natural increase of population in Charleston, is antagonised by emigration from the city, the aged being generally left. According to the report of the Register of that city, for 1844, the population was 29,963, (which is but 702 over that of the census of 1840,) and the mortality of the whites 553. Of these, 32, or 1 in 17 1-3 were aged from 60 to 70—31 or nearly 1 in 17 3-4 from 70 to 80—16 or 1 in 34 from 80 to 90—2 from 90 to 100—3 from 100 to 110—1 from 110 to 120. Here, the centenarians are as 1 in 138 1-4 of the whole number of deaths, being nearly three hundred and fifty times greater than in France: for in that country in fifteen years ending in 1832, during which period 11, 793, 289 deaths took place; only 25 were aged 100 years and over, that is, 1 in 471, 731.

The mortality in Charleston, for six years ending in 1846, was 3,569. In this number 12 were aged from 100 to 110, and 3 from 110 to 120; or, 1 centenarian in 237, nearly,—upwards of 1,000 times more than France.

This conclusion may be fortified by taking another route, namely, that relating to the geographical distribution of the very aged. For example, South Carolina, the richest of all the States, in centenarians, having too, according to the New Orleans Board of Health, a mean life about twice as long as the Northern States, has one centenarian in every 6,025 inhabitants for the whole State, and one in every 975 for its chief city, Charleston; while Indiana has but one in 29,508.1—Illinois one in 31,483.6—Missouri one in 40,480—Michigan, the same; and Wisconsin one in 42,924, and so on, with but few exceptions, chiefly relating to Rhode Island, (the poorest centenarian State) and to Louisiana the richest in centenarians, next to South Carolina. These discrepancies must give way, however, under the pressure of so many facts having a different import. Louisiana has a much higher ratio of children of five years and under, than Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusets, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia, with a slight increase over a number of other States; but Louisiana has a proportion considerably less than Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and some others. There are by the last census, fifteen centenarians, or one in every 5,879 inhabitants of New Orleans. This class is probably furnished chiefly by the creoles, while immigrants supply a large number of the younger classes, that is, persons under ten years of age, amounting to more than one fourth of the whole population, showing how, in some places, that extremes meet.

In the following enumerations, fractional parts of a year are reckoned as one year, when they exceed six months, or fall short of eighteen months, and so of all fractions in more advanced ages. In all cases it was deemed necessary in recording a series of ages, not to reject any because they were short, nor to seek any because they were long. Thus on one occasion, having completed the series for the time and the place, I came immediately to an inscription upon a well known negress, aged 107 years and five months—born in 1732—died in 1839, but the rule adopted, excluded this, as well as other similar cases. In the Lafayette cemetery, as the sexton informed me, there is a negress slave buried, aged 110. A similar age was found in the Catholic cemetery, after having finished the series. But all these were omitted.

The old Catholic cemetery, (No. 1, Basin street,) in which nearly all the inscriptions are French, 13 only were distributed among all other languages, gave the following results, after having made 136 observations:

The first series of	30	observations	gave an aggregate of	1474	years.
The second " "	30	"	"	1517	"
The third " "	30	"	"	1381	"
The fourth " "	30	"	"	1313	"
The fifth " "	16	"	"	852	"
Total obs.	136.		Total ages,	6537:	

mean life 48 years and a fraction: more than 21 years over the mean of the Hebrew cemetery—20 1-4 over that of the Bayou; 17 1-4 over that of the Protestant;—27 1-3 over that of Lafayette city;—12 over that of all France;—nearly 20 over that of the department of Seine, (Paris)—and about 22 years beyond the mean of the Old Protestant cemetery immediately adjacent. The following table shows the mean age, with the three oldest persons in each series, in this cemetery:

Series.	Mean age.	3 Oldest in each series.			Mean age of the 3 oldest.
1st. series	49.01	81	80	76	79
2nd. "	50.56	76	76	74	75.33
3rd. "	46.03	85	80	78	81
4th. "	43.76	85	81	72	7933
5th. "	53.25	92	90	90	90.66

Although, the place of nativity is not always mentioned in these inscriptions, yet out of Louisiana, the United States furnished but 1, and Ireland but 1, France 19, and Spain, Genoa, and St. Domingo each 4. The prevailing type, in this cemetery, is doubtlessly the creole French.

The old Protestant cemetery (adjoining the Catholic cemetery, on Basin street) long abandoned as a place of burial, gave for 30 inscriptions, an aggregate of 797 years, and a mean life of nearly 26 1-2 years—the 3 oldest, 62, 60, 47.

The new, and by far the most extensive of the Catholic cemeteries, is that in the rear of the former, consisting of four squares between Ro-

bertson and Claiborne streets, the southern portion of which is for the colored race. In this cemetery, especially in its northern portion, French inscriptions preponderate. The white race in 80 observations, afforded the following results: The first 30 gave an aggregate of 1296, and a mean of 42.2 years—the 3 oldest 89, 77, and 74; the second 30, gave a total of 1415; a mean of 47.16; the 3 oldest 80, 75, and 72; the residue 20 observations, gave a total of 997, a mean of 49.85 years; the 3 oldest 93, 80, and 75.

The aggregate of these 80 observations amount to 3678 years, giving a mean age of nearly 46. (After counting these 80, one was found aged 110, though, I could not count it consistently with my plan, which rejected the principle of selection.) In the middle division of this cemetery, 30 inscriptions, gave an average life of nearly 47 1-2 years.

By uniting these divisions of the Catholic cemetery No. 2 with that on Basin street, the observations will amount to 396—the aggregate 18,607 years, and the mean life of the whole, both of the whites and blacks, will be very nearly 47 years.

Of these 396 inscriptions, 49 were over 70;—13 over 80;—5 over 90.

The black race in this cemetery, buried in a style of magnificence nearly equal to the white, has usually French incriptions, indicating as the principle places of nativity, Louisiana, St. Domingo, Cuba, Jamaica, and Africa, and gave in 150 observations, the results which the following table expresses with the utmost brevity: There may be some error in the third series—a discrepancy there seems to be, inasmuch as this series gives a comparatively diminished total and mean life:

Series 30 Obs. each.	Aggregate ages of each series.	Mean ages of each series.	Three oldest in each series.		
1st. Series.	1594	53.13	100	85	80
2nd. "	1364	45.46	64	80	75
3rd. "	1102	37.4	95	82	70
4th. "	1318	43.93	100	83	79
5th. "	1585	52.0	100	92	90
Total ages of 150.	6,969				
Mean age of 150 persons.	46.43 years				

The united ages of the fifteen oldest persons in this enumeration, amount to 1,389 years, affording an average life far beyond "threescore and ten," (the limit indicated by the royal poet of the Hebrews,) namely, 86 1-2 years, with two centenarians for every hundred; or as many of that age as France affords in about half a million. Probably the en-

tire number of vaults and tombs in this African cemetery, does exceed two thousand, nor the dead bodies exceed three thousand. Now on the supposition, that by some strange and incredible chance, the one hundred and fifty inscriptions I took note of, actually exhausted the whole number of centenarians, (which I know was not true,) still the colored centenarians, transcend French centenarians, two hundred and fifty times.

It will be seen that the black race affords by these tables, 1 in 50, aged 100 years; and if we add 11 years to the lives of the remaining two oldest in the 150 enumerated, the result will be, five centenarians; or 1 in 30; or 8,333 times more than the ratio for all France; or 2,100 more than that of England, by the census of 1841; or if we take the official account of the deaths in France for the 15 years ending on the first of January, 1832, it will be found, that 150 inscriptions give for the black race in New Orleans, nearly one fifth as many centenarians, as 11, 793, 289, or nearly twelve millions of deaths among the French. But, by an exact calculation, the French bills of mortality, as above mentioned, give one aged one hundred, in every 471, 731; the black race one in fifty.

Each of the remaining cemeteries of New Orleans, as they contain a greater proportion of strangers, will be found to offer a rapid decrement in the mean life. The new and extensive Protestant cemetery of the Second Municipality, gave in the first 30 observations, as the three oldest, 73, 42, 40; the second 30 gave, for the three oldest, 78, 69, 66.—From 110 observations, a mean life was obtained of 30 3-4 years. The Hebrew cemetery, gave as the three oldest, 74, 63, 62, and an average of 27 years.

The Bayou cemetery or Potter's Field, not having monumental inscriptions, with few exceptions, proved an unsuitable field for necrological researches. From the rude and frail memorials of the dead, I obtained thirty five ages; the oldest three were, 55, 52, 46—the mean life of the whole, 27 3-4 years—a mean nearly twenty years less than that of the old Catholic, and the African cemeteries. It will be seen by the following table, that this is the general mean of the great number of yellow fever victims buried in this cemetery, calculated from 991 persons, whose ages were known, and whose bodies were buried here during the great epidemic of 1841, amounting to 91 more than the half of the entire number that perished that year. Each average life, is based on 30 ages, except the 33d, and last, which has 31. These series are arranged in the order of the epidemic. The upper line has the average life of each series of 30 ages each; the lower line gives the oldest individual age in each series, thus:

Average age.	26	2-30	29	14-30	28	25-30	29	27	3-30	26	27-30				
Oldest.	77		65		68		48	40		50					
26	1-2	27	2-3	29	7-30	27	1-30	29	9-30	29	21-30	29	22-30	29	3-30
46		41		56		38		45		57		60		47	
29	28-30	29	3-30	29	14-30	29	26-30	28	4-30	28	21-30	28	4-30		
48		58		58		50		40		10		58			

27	21-30	27	18-30	26	29-30	29	12-30	25	3-30	28	10-30	28	11-30		
65		65		46		65		58		56		53			
26	13-30	26	12-30	28	24-30	27	22-30	28	7-30.	)					
40		40		52		50		45		(					

From this table, it appears, that the mean life of the 11 oldest among the first 330 deaths, and the last 330, is for the former about 52 1-2, and for the latter 52; while, the intervening 330 give an average life of 55 1-2 years.

The aggregate of these 991 ages, is 27,919—the general mean 28.-172; or nearly 28 1-6. This mean, is similar to that of Ireland, and England according to the registered deaths from 1831 to 1841, but exceeds by more than four years, the mean given in the Report of the Board of Health of New Orleans for six years ending in 1846, based upon the entire number of interments in this cemetery.

The above table shows, also, the dyamical principle of immigration, alluded to in this paper, whereby, the aged are repelled, as not one old person appears in this enormous bill of mortality; one only exceeds 70—5 exceed 60.

As to this dynamical principle, I beg leave to remark here, (having omitted to explain myself in the proper place,) that I have for the sake of brevity, intentionally omitted the most satisfactory portion of the evidence, showing the geographical distribution of ages in the United States. What has been said of centenarians, (always a very limited class,) is not deemed by any means satisfactory, while, the other and by far more numerous classes of high ages, appear quite conclusive; as a few data will sufficiently show: for, in equal numbers, New Hampshire has more than twice as many aged from 50 to 60, as Iowa—from 60 to 70, nearly three times more than Indiana—more than three times more than Illinois—four times more than Iowa and Wisconsin. Connecticut has 1 in 39 aged from 70 to 80, while, Indiana has but 1 in 168—Illinois 1 in 237—Michigan 1 in 334—Wisconsin 1 in 346.—From 80 to 90, some of the old States (the sources of emigration) have from ten to twenty times more persons aged from 80 to 90, than the new States, (the centres of immigration.) All of these perturbations and inequalities are, to a great extent, independent of climatic causes and endemic influences.

From this digression, I return to grave-yard statistics once more.

Of 1450 deaths from yellow fever, from August to October, 1841, the females amounted to 220; of these latter, the ages of 194 were known. These being arranged in series of 30 each, except the last which contains 44 ages, give for the mean, and the oldest age of each series, the following results:

Females	Average age.	28	2-30	29	27-30	26	16-30	25	13-30	28	7-30	27	14-30		
	Oldest.	69		80		55		38		48		65			

The city of Lafayette, separated from New Orleans by a street only, abounds with German immigrants, who, with the Irish, are in both ci-

ties, the principal victims of yellow fever. The Lafayette cemetery is more favorable for inhumation, in the ground, than the New Orleans cemeteries; accordingly, this mode of sepulture is more common in the former. Among 30 ages taken from the vaults of that cemetery, 39 was the oldest, and the mean of the whole was only 20 3·4 years, which is the minimum of all the cemetries, being 26 years less than that of the black race, in the Catholic cemetery, and nearly two and a half times less than that on Basin street.

The Catholic cemeteries are supposed to reflect the creole life more accurately than the other cemeteries, which are newer, and have been filled with immigrants. The mean life as deduced from monumental evidence, though not identical with that deduced from the recent mortality of the city, by the Board, is confirmed by the latter; that is to say, the Catholic cemeteries take precedence of the Protestant, and the Protestant, of the Potter's Field. Any one acquainted with the different classes of the population, would have anticipated these results.*

Leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions from the necrological data which I have offered, I proceed to examine the grounds that have been recently taken against the salubrity of this city.

The great Hospital of America, that is the Charity Hospital of New Orleans, happens to have "a local habitation and a name" altogether wrong in statistical point of view, as the indicator of the health of the city. It ought to be called the Germano-Hibernian Charity Hospital, or, at least, a foreign Hospital, sustained by the almost unexampled liberality of Louisianians, but not for Louisianians. Here, vital histories, and necrological data, are recorded with a great degree of accuracy, all things considered. Its records are so accessible, and its reports so easily

*The following note, may possibly interest the reader: A vault is 8 feet deep, (horizontally;) 25 inches high, and 17 wide. Tombs are greatly varied in size. Of late years, wood has not formed a component part of vaults and tombs. The old Catholic and the old Protestant cemeteries have in consequence of the wood in their structures, in many instances, gone completely to decay.

Mahogany, and some other kinds of coffiins, usually decay in two years, while cypress remains sound many years, varying, of course, according to the humidity, &c.

The body is completely decomposed, the bones separated, and offensive gases dissipated in about three months, in the hot season, and in six months, in winter. I have fonnd that the bones of the young and old would frequently crumble into dust, from a slight pressure, after an emtombment of from 30 to 40 years. In the dry catacombs of Egypt they would doubtlessly last as many centuries. The sexton of one of the Catholic cemeteries, on opening a vault, in the upper range, to remove a body long buried, found the corpse completely desiccated—no putrefaction had taken place—the hair and whiskers were firmly fixed, and natural in appearance—the face was but little changed, and the eyes, though greatly dried up, remained. In temperate climates, corpses buried in the ground, require, probably, four years, at least, for decomposition.

copied, that writers having no others comparable with these, have from necessity which knows no law of logic, drawn their figures, chiefly from this institution, wherewith to illustrate, prove, and establish the sanitary condition of a city, which, from its commercial character, geographical position, easy excess by rivers, lakes, and seas, and from its public charity, becomes the asylum of foreign paupers, passing through, or temporarily resident in it. To these may be added sick and destitute boatmen, seamen, ditchers, wood-choppers, and raftmen, from the valley and swamps of the lower Mississippi, not to name a vast many poor consumptives seeking the benefit of the climate. Besides, New Orleans has been and continues to be, the recipient of the broken down soldiers, the *debris* of the armies of Generals Taylor and Scott. In fact, the Report, of the Board of Health, for 1849, could not have happened in a more unfavorable and unhealthy period, that which they have selected.

At no period, however, can the statistics of the Charity Hospital, be appealed to as the test of the salubrity of New Orleans, as a whole.—Thus in twenty years ending in 1850, the admissions of patients into that institution, (according to Dr. Fenner's valuable Medical Reports) amounted to 123,917 of which number only 1293 were Louisianians, that is to say, about one in every hundred. But probably not more than half of these were citizens of New Orleans, that is, one in every two hundred. Admitting, what is generally conceeded, that the hospital admissions, represent from 1-4th. to 1-3d. of the whole number of sick strangers; but taking the latter ratio as a guide, it follows, that 371,751 strangers are to be charged to the sick list of the actual citziens of the town. Thus, "the annual Report of the Board of Health for the city of New Orleans, for 1849," makes the announcement, in general terms, that "the mortality is unquestionably great"—admitting, however, as it does, that "a very considerable portion of it [the mortality] is derived from the floating population, not enumerated in the census which should have been stated in the mortuary certificates," [but which was not so stated.] The report adds,

"The efforts of the Board have been incessant to procure a knowledge of the actual sanitary condition of the city, as without such knowledge, all attempts to improve it would be but groping in the dark; for that purpose they prepared and extensively circulated a set of by-laws, rules and regulations, with blanks for every purpose required by the Board; requesting physicians and others, whose duty it was made by law to prepare certificates to legalise burials, to give such information, as if complied with, would leave nothing wanting on this important department of their duty; the most urgent means have been used to obtain compliance, but they regret to say with unsatisfactory results." * *

* "*The Board excepts with pleasure from this implied censure, the cemetery reports emenating from the Charity Hospital, they have usually contained* MOST OF THE INFORMATION REQUIRED. The deepest regret is felt at this omission, as we have few past records of what that situation has been, we are proceeding on ignorant of what are the actual truths, with a reputation abroad for perennial pestilence, with a boasting at home of unparalleled salubrity, it is high time the truth

should be known. With the recent correction of the census, and knowing the probable number of the dead, we have at last arrived at the important facts of the *ratio of mortality*, it is large enough to remove the scales from the eyes of error: to excite curiosity as to its cause, and to demand of all those who have the interest of the city at heart, or value their own lives and those of their families, efforts to remove them.—Had the information sought for by the Board, been obtained some years back, the actual influence of this climate upon the health of each and every class of the community, natives and immigrants, would be now accurately known."*

If the great foreign pauper Hospital of New Orleans is to furnish, "the information required," and is to be the criterion of the health of the city, "*the ratio of mortality must be large* enough" to satisfy the winged skeleton who carries the scythe, the allegorical representation of death. Here, however, the numerical filiation "comes in such a questionable shape," as to justify further inquiry. It is believed that the data which serve as the bases of these opinions, admit of a more favorable interpretation. The writer of this paper belongs to that class, which the Board alludes to, as "boasting at home of unparalleled salubrity; it is high time the truth should be known, &c."

Even so. "It is high time," the distant public should know, with the exception of a singe class, strangers, that both whites and blacks are excempt from fatal epidemic fevers in New Orleans. It is believed that this exemption is "unparalleled," at least, in northern cities, either in America, or Europe. Who has even seen among the natives, and acclimatees of the city, a fatal epidemic of yellow fever, congestive, remittent, or typhus?

This Report, emenating as it does from gentlemen of high standing, enriched as it is, with facts accumulated chiefly by its able Chairman and Reporter, Dr. Barton, must exercise, at home and abroad, considerable influence, and the more so, because it is not chargeable with any *biases* in favor of the climate of New Orleans: indeed, if there be any biases at all, they are in a quite contrary direction, bearing hard against commercial interests, as a severe scrutiny of all the essential facts relating to the city, past, and present, including those entering into that Report, would probably show. At least, the public at home and abroad, will hear both sides. The patriotic and disinterested Board, would be the first to rejoice, if it should turn out after all the saturnalia of figures, that the sanitary condition of New Orleans should be unquestionably good, instead of being "unquestionably bad," taking their own facts as tests.

The Report asserts, "that the average age at death in the northern cities, (doubtless owing in a great measure to the large mortality in infantile life,) is from 19 years, 9 months, to 20 years, 3 months, and

*From an able and prominent member of the Board of Health, I learn that the general subject of the vital statistics of the city, is not included within the scope of its duties, excepting the sanitory measures, the mortuary reports, and the like, for the current year of service.

in some of the cemeteries where destitute foreigners from the crowded parts of the city of Boston are buried, it is reduced to 13.49. * *

* * "In the city of New Orleans the average age at death for the last year was 26.69, and in a series of years, the aggregate of all the cemeteries was 22.63." Is an increased average life to be considered a proof of the insalubrity of our climate, especially, when that life is twice as great as in some of the cemeteries of Boston? The foreigh population of Boston, is about equal to the native. Nearly all of the former are Irish. These Irish, in going from their own country to Boston, go to a climate like their own—not to a tropical climate, as in New Orleans—an important consideration.

Now, the Report shows in the Potter's Field or Bayou cemetery, (the great Irish Necropolis of New Orleans,) that the average life taken for six years ending in 1846, is nearly 24, that is, nearly one fifth more than the native and foreign mean life of the most favored Northern cities.—The Report shows in the Catholic cemetery, for four years ending in 1844, among 442 deaths, that there were ten aged more than one hundred years! Now, it requires nearly two and a half millions of people in France to produce ten centenarians,* according to the census, and and still more according to the official bills of mortality. The entire department of the Seine, (Paris,) would have only eight centenarians provided it *had ten millions of inhabitants*,† which is nearly one third of the population of the entire Republic. Is it a proof that "the mortality, of New Orleans is unquestionably great," to show that one in 44 dies aged beyond 100 years, while, by the census of 1840, there is in the United States but one in 6,157 aged 100 years? In England and Wales there is but 1 of this age in every 55,555—in France, 1 in every 250,000. The centenarians in the Catholic cemetery, are, therefore, nearly six thousand times greater (in equal numbers) than in France. Even the Potter's Field, according to the Report, in 8,566, gives 9 centenarians, or 1 in every 951, that is, about 26.3 times more than the French Republic.

The Report estimates the moriality for 1849, at 9,862, of which number, Louisiana and New Orleans furnished less than one in every 12, and the residue of the United States about one in 20. Those known to have been foreigners—3,569—and those whose places of nativity, were not known, that is, four thousand 985, were probably, nearly all foreigners, negroes excepted. The United States, including Louisiana and New Orleans, contributed to the whole number, namely, 9,862, only 1,308. Now, let us give the Report, nearly twice as many deaths for the United States, namely,—1,017 more than the number mentioned in the Report, whereby, it will appear that foreigners, nevertheless, exceeded Americans between four and five times; or, by the figures of the Report, nearly eight times. Can any other city show a mortality, in which, *its own share*, including that of the tempo-

*Essai sur la Statistique de la Population Française. Par le comte A. D'Angeville.

† Ibid.

rary residents of the whole State, is less than one in 12? Would a Parisian, write self-damnatory opinions against the climate of that city, upon such data? Concede to the Report 1,017 deaths of native Americans beyond its own account—admit, (what is probably true,) that all the centenarians mentioned, are natives; and, what is the result? The Report gives 1 aged 130; 1 aged 110; 1 aged 105; and twenty aged 100; or, 23 aged 100 and over; that is more than one centenarian to every 101; or, two thousand five hundred times more than France; or, taking the deaths of Louisianians, alone, 23 centenarians in 29 deaths; or 1 centenarian to 33 deaths among the natives of the city. Facts of this sort, surely, do not prove "the mortality to be twice as great as it ought to be" compared with other places.

Even the Cholera passed by the natives of New Orleans, to a very great degree, taking the Report as authority. Thus, of 3,171 deaths which took place from that disease, in 1849, the natives of the city and of the State, contributed only 106; or, 1 in 30 nearly, of the whole. Among 783 deaths from yellow fever, the State and city contributed 2; or, 1 in 391.5, and, among 640 deaths from all other fevers, but 17; or about 1 in 40. In fact, it is the mortality of foreigners, that enables the Report to conclude that mortality of New Orleans, has been, for ten years, 1 in 20 annually, instead of 1 in 40.

Again, Dr. Fenner, in his Reports, shows that in 1849, the total number admitted into the Charity Hospital of New Orleans, was 15,558—of these, 13,634 were from foreign countries; from countries unknown, 142, probably nearly all foreigners; making 13,776 foreigners —from the different States of the Union, 1782, were admitted, leaving, as he shows, only 147 for all Louisiana. That is one Louisianian for every 103.79 patients born in other climates. And, yet, these foreigners furnish the data so much relied on, as the tests of the insalubrity of New Orleans! If 1000,000 to 150,000 transient persons reside from one week, to 6 months, leave 1,000 or 10,000 dead behind them, this number distributed, not among the transient population to which they properly belong, but among the residents, will mislead the inquirer.— No city, how healthy so ever it may be, can have, under such a system, any other than a high ratio of mortality.

Dr. Fenner shows, that of the whole number admitted into the Charity Hospital in 1849, 17 1-2 per cent., died, making 2,739 deaths.— This ratio will give Louisiana, about 27 deaths; but, several reasons could be adduced, rendering it probable that Louisianians did not furnish an average mortality half as great, in the 100, as foreigners—say 12, in 147. Here, then, are 12 deaths to 2,727: or, if figures be taken without explanation 147 sick Louisianians furnished, in 1849, no fewer than 2,739, deaths. Thus a Louisianian has 228.25 lives, while a cat was never suspected to have more than nine.

Dr. Fenner gives the statistics of the Charity Hospital for 20 years, ending in 1850: admissions 123,917; of these 1283 were Louisianians, a little over one in a hundred. Adopting the usual estimate, namely, that the other hospitals and the private cases in the city, exceed those of the Charity Hospital in the ratio of two to one, then, the last 20 years

gave 321,917 cases of sickness, of which, 3,879 were from Louisiana—in round numbers 3,000, to 318,000.

Of 1,800 who died of yellow fever, in New Orleans, in 1841, the State of Louisiana and its cities, contributed but 8; or, 1 in 225; the nine most southern States, including Texas, only 25; or, 1 in 72; and the entire black race only 3; or, 1 in 600.

The Hospitals of Paris, are for Frenchmen; the Charity Hospital of New Orleans, the only one in the State of Louisiana, is virtually for foreigners. In Paris one sixth of the whole population die in the public Hospitals.* In a population of 700,000, no less than 70,000, or, 1 in every ten, pass annually through the public Hospitals,† while, in the Charity Hospital of New Orleans, the whole State, in 12 years, ending in 1842, supplied, among 59,021 patients, only 556; or, 45 annually, that is, one to 7,831—a ratio 783 times less than that of Paris. In 1842, among 4,404 patients in the Charity Hospital, Louisiana furnished only 34, not 1 in ten thousand of the inhabitants, or one thousand times less than Paris. In Dublin in 1827, more than 1 in 4 entered the fever Hospitals of that city, namely, 60,000‡—a ratio twenty-five thousand times above that of Louisiana.

An extreme case will best serve to illustrate the principle. Suppose that the population proper of New Orleans is 100,000—suppose that the worship of gold, or of Mahomet, shall attract to this Mecca during an epidemic, four hundred thousand pilgrims, one fourth, of whom shall die of yellow fever. The survivors all retire, leaving, of course, their dead, which, instead of being charged to the statistical account of these strangers themselves, will be reckoned, according to our present system, in the bills of mortality of the city proper; consequently, it will appear that there is not at the year's end, a single person left alive in the city. This it may be said, is a clear proof of the inherent mortality of the city. To illustrate this point, assume on the contrary, another extreme case, namely, that New Orleans is of all cities, the most salubrious for both natives and strangers, yet, it may be confidently affirmed that its ratio of mortality will be comparatively high.

Again, suppose that Her Britanic Majesty's subjects, of the city of London, were to visit New Orleans every year for pleasure, or health, and, there can be little doubt that during winter, they would be gainers, as to the latter, by escaping typhus, pulmonary diseases, &c., still, this migration would from the first of November to the first of May, throw into the Necropolis of New Orleans, perhaps twenty-five thousand dead bodies, which, according to figures, as now used, would prove that one in every four died annually, in this city, even though not one citizen should die during the whole year. Nay, on the supposition that creoles and acclimatees of the city, are immortal, and that others only die, still the mortality must be considerable.

*Dupin. Alison.
†Ib.
‡Alison.

New Orleans, placed between the great valley of the Mississippi, and the great ocean, receives such a disproportionate number of unacclimated strangers, as to destroy all just comparisons with other cities, under our present system of determining the ratio of mortality.

The census of New Orleans, by the United States, how correctly so ever taken, must in its application to this city, at least, virtually mislead the vital statistician. The census of 1850, will have been taken in midsummer, during the brief absence of one third of the population proper. Add to the annual mortality of the absentees and of the strangers who will have arrived soon after the decennial enumeration, and it will probably be found, without any epidemic fever whatever, that two thirds of the mortality will have happened, during the ensuing year, among these classes, not enumerated. Now, when this mortality is distributed among those actually counted, in the census, the ratio will be high, and, at the same time, statistically false. The vital statistics of N. Orleans is, in a great degree peculiar, because its vital conditions are so, both statically and dynamically, internally and externally.

For 36 years ending in 1837, the annual mean increase of population, in France, was 147,918. (D'Angeville.) Now according to the estimate of some, the annual increase of temporary residents in New Orleans, is one hundred and twenty-three thousand—a number, not twenty five thousand less than the annual increase in all France. This last country requires 139 years to double its population, while New Orleans more than doubles its population by temporary residents, annually.—These latter, leave their dead to swell the bills of mortality in New Orleans.

The Report asserts that England and Massachusetts are favorable to infantile life, beyond all the known parts of the world, N. Orleans excepted; "the climate [of the latter] being extremely mild at all periods of life under 20 and above 50." True. But no country or city with such a climate, ought to have a short mean life; nor ought 1 in 20 to die annually; nor is it easy to comprehend how "the mortality is at *least double* what it ought to be," to use the words and *italics* of the Report.—In fact, the Report names places where the annual mortality is but 1 in 55; 1 in 44, &c.; that is to say, nearly three times less than in New Orleans. Well may it be affirmed, that the mortality in the latter, "is at *least double* what it ought to be."

The California emigration now in progress, is a remarkable example of the perturbations which social physics exercise over vital statistics. Salubrious towns along the routes pursued, will soon double their mortality, without any increase of sickness among the natives or passengers. The grave-yard statistics of California must, already, differ from those of any other country. The mortuary records must contain males, rather than females and children, young men rather than aged, and withal a long mean life, be the ratio of mortality high or low.

The system of migration continues to flow to the torrid zone, or to the tropical borders of both temperate zones; to the plains of the Mississippi, to the Llanos, and Pampas of South America, and to the West

Indies. Now it is a problem unsolved by experience, whether a migration of the natives of these hot countries to the icy circle, would not be more fatal than that of Northerners towards the torrid zone. Would notnor thern typhus, with pulmonary diseases transcend in mortality, southern remittent, and yellow fever?

But, in no case can acclimating diseases be received as the precise standard of salubrity, or insalubrity for the entire, much less native population. The contingent, is not the positive;—nor the incidental, the inherent. It is not logical to try a northern climate, solely by southern men. So of the contrary. It is a question relating to a particular class, and not to the whole population.

Although, Dr. Copeland,* is much more enamored with the climate of England, than the Board of Health seems to be with the climate of New Orleans; yet he admits "that a native of Africa who removes immediately to Europe, seldom lives over two winters." Now suppose that three millions of Africans were to remove to London, every winter, and that one million should die there annually, while not a native Londoner should give up the ghost among two millions, would it not appear by figures that "the ratio of mortality would be high," that is, one in every two, annually? Are there not three strangers in New Orleans every year for every two natives, as in the above supposition?

If the health of New Orleans be now unquestionably bad, it was once unquestionably good. From the foundation of the city, until near the close of the last century, (1796) †there was probably not a single epidemic, except one in the year 1769, the character of which remains in doubt to this day, though, some modern writers assume that it could been nothing short of yellow fever; but this is not probable, because, the French physicians and the scientific travellers in Louisiana, must have been apprised, at an early period, of the characteristics of yellow fever in the French colonies, in the West Indies, where it had prevailed nearly a century before New Orleans was founded.

There is not, probably, any considerable city in the United States, or in the West Indies, whose early sanitary history is so favorable as that of New Orleans. The early writers upon this subject, who speak of the climate, represent it as unquestionably good. Some are silent; but even this furnishes negative proof in favor of this position. Not long after the foundation of New Orleans, the Parisian press teemed with works on Louisiana, its climate, topography, botany, zoology, and its native inhabitants. Many of these works were of an official character, having originated in scientific expeditions ordered by the French Government. In Charlevoix's Work, (3 vols. 4 to. Paris, 1744,) the city is described—its topography animadverted on—its inhabitants estimated at two hundred, in January, 1722, (four years after the city was found-

*Dict. Med. Art. Climate.

†The Political history of the country, shows that the citizens of the United States did not obtain permission to deposit merchandize in New Orleans, until the year 1795, the period alluded to in the work above mentioned.

ed.) The regular houses were not built; temporary ones were occupied on the river's bank. Laval's work, (on Louisiana, Paris, 1728,) as well as Charlevoix's, says nothing against the salubrity of the place. Bossu, in his new voyages, (1768) says that the creoles are large and well made. Du Pratz, in his history of Louisiana, in 1758, (in three volumes,) says that life in this climate is not only long but pleasant.

In a work published in Paris in 1802, edited by Duvallon, founded on three year's actual residence, Louisiana is described as exempt from epidemic diseases, its fevers were mild, and rarely dangerous; the rates of mortality was small; whites and blacks of both sexes lived long, and were still fresh and vigorous at the age of sixty. This writer maintains that the yellow fever formed the only exception to this favorable sanitary condition of the city; that this malady was not proper to the place, and had not been known until within the six or seven years preceding 1802, a period during which it had prevailed nearly every summer, and was wholly attributable to the commercial intercourse with the North Americans.

This author asserts that from the end of October to the begining of July, there is in both town and country, but little sickness, and that death rarely occurs. During the hot season of three years preceeding 1803, the mercury arose no higher than from 24° to 26°; (Reau.) nor did it descend, in the winters lower than two degrees below the freezing point.

He asserts that the most extraordinary cold ever known in New Orleans, took place in 1784, when ice, in great quantity, formed in Lower Louisiana, obstructing the ferries for three or four days; ships arriving from sea encountered great blocks of floating ice, both in the Gulf of Mexico and in the river.

La Harpe the agent of the French Government, sent to explore the boundaries, climate, &c. of Louisiana, arrived at New Orleans in the fall of 1718. In 1724, after having spent five years in Louisiana, chiefly in N. Orleans, he returned to France. His Journal is minute, butcontains no account of fevers, or other epidemics in the colony. He estimates the inhabitants of the city, including the troops, at sixteen hundred—the climate as being temperate—the air as salubrious. (355.356.) The people, he continues, were entirely exempt from the epidemics which desolated other parts of North America. New comers, for the most part were attacked with a slight fever (*une fievre lente,*) which caused debility, but never death; (on ne voit pas de personnes en mourir.)—The province, which had a black population of 1,600 was every where salubrious, particularly along the sea-shore.

Lozieres, in his second voyage to Louisiana, 1794 to 1798, (2 vols. Paris, 1803,) asserts the salubrity of New Orleans, and seems much puzzled to explain it. He concludes, however, that the cause must be sought in the universal use of the Mississippi water. (T. i.313.) He

says, New Orleans is an enchanting abode*—a flower garden, deliciously situated; its soil fertile; its air salubrious, &c.

The talented Mr. Darbey, (still living,) who arrived in Louisiana soon after its transfer to the United States, and whose public duties as surveyor for many years, gave him the best opportunities for observation, declares that the "creole possesses an ardent mind, a light athletic frame of body, active, indefatigable, and docile, well qualified to perform military duty. * * * "The women of Louisiana," he adds, "are with few exceptions well formed, with a dark piercing eye.—Their movements bespeak warmth of imagination, and a high flow of animal spirits, whilst their features indicate good nature and intelligence." (Geog. Descrip. La. 273—276.)

Robin, in his travels, in Louisiana, from 1802 to 1806, (3 vols. Paris, 1817.) avers, that the country has but few chronic diseases, diarrhœa being the most common and fatal. He mentions sore throat, as sometimes prevailing among children; also, infantile tetanus (le mal de machoire,) together with yellow fever, which, a few years previously had appeared, for the first time in the city, and which he identifies by Father Labat's description, enlarging on its pathology as a disease of the blood, or rather as a rarefaction of that fluid, causing dilatation, tension and compression, in persons from the North, whose blood he supposes is too rich and dense. Tropical acclimation, according to him, renders the blood thinner, lighter, and less dilatable.

In a work upon Louisiana, (1794 to 1798) it is affirmed that females, born in this climate are not only healthful, but have a fresh and brilliant complexion, fine teeth, vermillion-colored lips, with a *physique* rivalling the most renowned oriental beauties. As the most acerb physiologist will admit, that physical beauty affords, at least presumptive proof of the salubrity of a climate, I will give one or two quotations, by way of contrast to those dismal accounts of southern people given by by Dr. Forry and others.

In his book on the climate of the United States, the lamented Dr. Forry, gives the following picture of the *physique* of southerners:

"In the tide-water region of the Southern States the human frame is weakly or imperfectly developed, the mortality of children is very great, and the mean duration of life is comparatively short. In the low lands of our southern States generally, may be seen deplorable examples of the physical, and perhaps mental, deterioration induced by endemic influences. In early infancy, the complexion becomes sallow, and the eyes assume a bilious tint. Advancing towards the years of maturity, the growth is arrested, the limbs become attenuated, and the vicera engorged. Boys of 15 years may be seen bowed down with premature old age—a mere vegetating being with an obstructed, bloated, and dropsical system, subject to periodical fevers, passive hæmorrhages, and those other forms of disease which follow in the train of malaria,"

*Local attachments are apt to degenerate into extravagance. The devout Arab calls, Mecca, "The city of God." An Italian poet prayed that the eternal Gods might destroy him on the day that he forgot Rome. "A Neapolitan exclaims, 'See the Bay of Naples and die!'"

—and which would ultimately depopulate the country, "were it not that the means of subsistence for those who survive become more abundant."*

"Look here, upon this picture, and on this:"—The writer, who had been a resident of New Orleans at the close of last century, after having given a most favorable physical history of the men,† thus discribes the women:

"Les femmes, nees dans un climat sain ou la corruption des moeurs n' a degrade le moral, ni altere le physique, y brillent de fraicheur.—Leur visage annonce la *sante* et l'aimable innocence. Toutes sont ou jolies, ou belles, gaies sans coquetterie, aimables sans pretentions; leurs dents sont long-tems d'une, extreme blancheur, et leurs levres toujours vermeilles. On pourrait, sans flatterie et sans exageration, leur appliquer ce qu'on vaconte des georgiennes et des circassiennes."

In a book of travels, in Louisiana, during 1801—2—3, it is affirmed that "les dames creoles ont pour la plupart le sang beau; la fraicheur de leur teint," etc.

Even now, in less halcyon days, it could be shown that female immigrants suffer less from the climate, certainly much less from yellow fever, than males. For example, among 1450 deaths from that disease, from August to October 1841, only two hundred and twenty were females, that is, 1 in 6.59. In the Protestant cemetery, from July 31st. to October 26th. of the same year, 63 interments took place—ten only were females.

During the epidemic of 1839, there were 102 yellow fever interments in the Protestant cemetery; of this number 14 only were females; or 1 in 7.28.

Having glanced at the early sanitary history of Lower Louisiana, the reader will allow me the liberty of quoting a few curious passages, without comment, in relation to the same era, in the history of some of the southern States. The contrast is striking. The sanitary laws in the days of yore were sufficiently stringent, the medical treatment bad, the pathology worse, and the ratio of mortality high.

The laws of Virginia,‡ (May 24th. 1610—June 22nd. 1611—printed in 1612)—ordain:§ "There shall no man or woman, dare to wash any unclean linnen, or throw out the water or suds of foul clothes, in the open streets, within the Palisades, or within forty feet of the same, nor rinse, and make clean, any kettle, pot, or pan, or such like vessels within twenty feet of the old well, or new pump: nor shall any one aforesaid within less than the quarter of one mile from the Palisades, dare do the

---

*365—6.

†The members of the Legislature of Louisiana, who represent more swamps, crevasses, lagoons, bayous, inundations, bays, lakes, canebrakes, floating prairies, mosquitoes, frogs, and crocodiles, than any other assembly in Christendom, present, nevertheless, the physical characteristics of vigorous health, to an extent, probably unsurpassed by any similar body.

‡Force. Tracts. 4 vols.

§I give the modern orthography.

necessities of nature, since by these unmanly, slothful, and loathesome immodesties, the whole Fort may be choked, and poisoned with ill airs, and so corrupt (as in all reason cannot but much infect the same) and this shall they take notice of, and avoid, upon pain of whipping and further punishment, as shall be thought meet, by the censure of a court martial. Every man shall have an especial and due care, to keep his house sweet and clean and so much of the street, as lieth before his door, and especially he shall so provide, and set his bedstead whereon he lieth, that it may stand three feet at least from the ground, as he will answer the contrary at a martial court."

The Rev. Jno. Clayton, writes to the Royal Society, May, 12th, 1688, thus, of Virginia: "In July and August, the air becomes stagnant, the heat violent and troublesome. In September the weather usually breaks suddenly, and there falls generally very considerable rains,—many now fall sick of endemical diseases, for seasonings, cachexies, fluxes, scorbutical dropsies, gripes, or the like which I have attributed to this reason: That by the extraordinary heat, the ferment of the blood being raised too high, and the tone of the stomach relaxed, when the weather breaks, the blood falls, and like over-fermented liquors is depauperated, or turns eager and sharp, and there's a crude digestion, whence the named distempers may be supposed to ensue.—And for confirmation I have observed the carminative seeds, such as warm, and whose oils sheathes the acid humors that ever result from crude digestions. But decoctions that retain the tone of the stomach, as I suppose, by making the little glands in the tunics of the stomach, squeeze out their juice, (for what is bitter may be as well offensive to the stomach, as to the palate,) and then chalybiates that raise the decayed ferment, are no bad practice; after which, I conceive, aromatic spirits might be very beneficial. But their doctors are so learned, that I never met with any of them that understood what aromatic spirits were: Two or three of them ran me clear down* by consent, that they were vomitive, and that they never used anything for that purpose but Crocus Metallorum, which indeed every house keeps; and if their finger, as the saying is, ache but, they immediately give three or four spoonfuls thereof; if this fail, they give him a second dose, then perhaps purge them with 15 or 20 grains of the resin of Jalap, afterwards sweat with venice treacle, powder of snakeroot, or Gascoin's powder, and when these fail *conclamatum est.*"

In a narrative of the colony of Georgia from its settlement; by Patrick Tailfer, M. D., H. Anderson, A. M., and others, (Charleston, 1741,) is the following statement:

"The falling of timber was a task very unequal to the strength of white servants; and the hoeing the ground, they being exposed to the

* A consultation of seven doctors:

"Some roared for Jalap—rhubarb some—
And some cried out for Dover;
We'll give him something, each one said—
Why e'en we'll give him over."

The last line of this stanza, is a good translation of *conclamatum est.*

sultry heat of the sun, insupportable; and it is well known, that this labor is one of the hardest upon the negroes, even though their constitutions are much stronger than white people, and the heat no way disagreable nor hurtful to them; but in us it created inflammatory fevers of various kinds, both continued and intermittent; wasteing and tormenting fluxes, most excruciating cholics and dry belly-aches; tremors, vertigoes, palsies, and a long train of painful and lingering nervous distempers; which brought on to many a cessation of both work and life. So general were these disorders, that during the hot season which lasts from March to October, hardly one half of the servants and the working people, were ever able to do their masters or themselve the least service; and the yearly sickness of each servant, generally speaking, cost his master as much as would have maintained a negro for four years."

Beauchamp Plantagenet, in 1648, in his description of the Province of New Albion, in North Virginia, says: On my view of Virginia, I disliked Virginia, &c. According to his account, agues, and other diseases, prevailed greatly among the marshes:—"No wonder the old Virginians affirm, the sickness there the first thirty years to have killed 100,000 men. And *then* generally five or six imported died, and *now* in June, July and August chiefly, one in nine die imported," &c.

In a pamphlet published in 1610, by the advice and direction of the Council of Virginia, entitled, "a true declaration of the estate of the colony of Virginia," it is said: "No man ought to judge of any country by the fens and marshes (such as is the place where Jamestown standeth.) Of a hundred and odd, which were seated at the falls [of the River,] under the government of Capt. F. West, and of a hundred to the seaward on the south side of the River (in the country of Nansamond,) under the charge of Capt. J. Martin, there did not so much as one man miscarry, when in Jamestown, at the same time, and in the same months, 100 sickened and half the number died."

The vital statistics of southern climates, have been, in most instances, based on Army Reports, relating to shifting masses of northern, dissipated, unacclimated troops, among whom the ratio of mortality is high. But is this the true test of the insalubrity of a climate, except for that particular class? As well might the ratio of mortality in a country be deduced from the mortality of its battle fields. The Mars of modern times, whose star culminated over central Europe, paled and fell under the inclemency of Russian skies. The sun never shone upon a more powerful army than that which Napoleon marched into Russia, in 1812. Of half a million of warriors, (who were successful in nearly every encounter,) only 80,000 escaped. The residue perished in a few weeks, chiefly from the coldness of a Russian winter. But this great mortality does not indicate the true ratio proper to the climate.

The scope of this paper does not include the special investigation of the climate of New Orleans as it affects immigrants alone. Acclimation is a subject so difficult, so extensive, and so important, that it cannot be disposed of in a summary manner. Accurate, popularized infor-

mation on this subject, is a great desideratum, and might prevent the senseless sacrifice of hundreds of lives, which ignorant, avaricious heads of families make, almost every year, for the hope of gaining dollars. Of the vast number of destitute families who come from high northern latitudes to this city, few comparatively, intend to settle permanently, and few remain beyond the acclimating period. Hence arises a useless waste of life. The acclimated are constantly replaced by the unacclimated. Wave follows wave—epidemic, epidemic. The parent, who, for the mere chance of gain, without intending to become a permanent resident, brings his family from a cold climate to New Orleans, during the hot season, is not guiltless; nor is the writer who would conceal from the immigrant the real dangers of southern acclimation, altogether innocent. The prudent who possess means to command the physical comforts, including the timely aid of doctors and nurses, incur but little danger during an epidemic, and obtain great advantages in their subsequent immunity from epidemic fevers. Accurate knowledge of the climate, is one of the greatest means of obviating its temporary ill effects upon the immigrant, during acclimation, after which, as Shakspeare saith,

"The blessed gods
Purge all infection from our air, whilst you
Do climate here."

The vital perturbations of New Orleans, in modern times, have been unexampled. Its great epidemic, causes the population to vibrate to and fro, with almost the regularity of a pendulum. This, it must be admitted, is presumptive proof against the healthfulness of the climate for wrangers.

Many circumstances, in no way connected with the salubrity of New Orleans, combine to produce every year, an ebb and flow, in its population. The maturation, and transportation of the crops of the great valley of the Mississippi, the navigable condition of its numerous rivers, the concentration of vessels from sea, and the mildness of the climate from November to July, all conspire to attract a multitude to the city during a portion of the year, only, making New Orleans a grand caravansary, a commercial panorama, a lottery for speculation, as well as a statistical enigma, not to mention the social evils inherent to a transitional, if not a chaotic condition of society. Besides all this, the emigration of the acclimated, represses the progress and paralyzes the energies of the city, vitally, socially, and commercially. Immigration alone, keeps alive the yellow fever, which, but too often, fills its streets with hearses, and blackens its reputation for salubrity.

A French philosopher declares, that there is always something in the misfortunes of others, which doth not displease us. Without sanctioning this maxim, the people of New Orleans may, nevertheless, comfort themselves with the reflection that they live, on an average, much longer than the citizens of New York, taking the Report of the Board of Health for authority. This same authority, which pronounces London to be "twice as salubrious as New Orleans," shows that during last

year, the average age at death, was, with the trifling exception of three months, equal to that of London.

The Report shows that the mortality of New Orleans from consumption and all other pulmonary diseases is, about half as great as in Philadelphia, New York, Havana, Baltimore, and Charleston; sometimes much less, and sometimes a little more than this ratio: thus, omitting fractions, in every 100 deaths in the two cities first named, 28 die of these diseases, while in New Orleans, the proportion is only 13; and, for consumption alone, only 9; being not half as great as in Havana, where it is 19. This statement, in connection with another from the same source, showing that the average life of New Orleans is much longer than in the northern cities, proves that the former, will compare with the latter, most favorably, as it regards salubrity and long life. This favorable comparison, will become more apparent, as soon as the sociological equilibrium shall be duly established between the dynamical and statical elements of the population of New Orleans.

Vital Statistics.

A. HESTER, M.D.: *Editor of the N. O. Med. and Surg. Journal.*

Dear Sir:—Fearing, as I do, that in my paper on the sanitary condition of New Orleans, I have not sufficiently explained my distrust in the statistical data hitherto obtained in all countries, (including, of course, those I have recorded,) I have concluded to address this note to you, on that topic, for publication. It may soothe the minds of statistical writers, to know that, as the evidence now stands, the calamities of New Orleans are not wholly owing to its unexampled mortality, nor to its short mean life compared to other places, inasmuch, as the data at home and abroad are too inaccurate and too limited for satisfactory deductions to our disadvantage. "'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view." But ever since Adam quit Paradise, death has prevailed in the North and in the South. All the learned agree, however, that Eden was situated in the latter region, and that post-mortem examinations and statistics, never would have been necessary had Adam remained therein.

Statistics is a new science, which, I believe, originated in Italy, and which at first was restricted to material wealth, or rather to the enumeration of the houses in that country. That branch of the science called Vital Statistics, originated very recently, and is, as yet, very incomplete, its data being imperfect and not sufficiently extended over long tracts of time, while its practical methods are too discordant to justify exact comparisons and positive conclusions between country and country, climate and climate, city and city.

Different nations, have adopted different statistical methods, according to the prevailing *bias*, whether military, industrial, or vital. The decennial census of the United States, does not include within its scope even the more prominent elements of vital statistics. Its classification of ages has varied from time to time. In the census of 1800, all aged 16 and under form one class—that of 1810, subdivides this class,—in that of 1830, all aged 45 and over, form but one class, which at the next census, undergoes six and a half decimations.

The British enumerations, so much relied on in this country, ("'Tis distance lends," &c.,) form one enormous blunder, notwithstanding the superiority of the plans proposed. The British census of 1821 was not made compulsory; the law left it optional with the overseers of the poor to act or not "as might be satisfactory to themselves, and not inconvenient to the parties."* In the census of 1831, the ages were omitted altogether. In 1841, the two classes appointed to take the census and make the Registry, pursued different routes, calling the same territories by different names, according to the town, parish, or country, so that the same name did not represent the same district. The effect of this error, is thus estimated by the Edinburgh Review:

*McCulloch. Stat. Brit. Emp.

"By taking the population of a county, and dividing it by the total births or deaths in the Registrar, as has been done in statistical works, the arithmetical comparison would lead only to error, since it would not give the proportionate number,—the whole value of the census and Registry abstracts for mutual comparison being destroyed." These mistakes extend to most counties, and "destroy the effect of comparison with former ascertained results, and cause statistical writers to puzzle themselves with things not true."*

There is not a single State of the American Union, in which either the mean life, or the ratio of mortality is accurately known. Not a State west of the Allegheny mountains has been inhabited long enough to determine any question of this kind, much less the natural history of the climate as it influences the health and longevity of a single generatian born on the soil.

It is to be hoped that, as one good turn deserves another, some of the statisticians of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, will be so polite as to undertake to prove the people of New Orleans to be long lived, and, at least two or three times more healthy than their own citizens; all which they may do without contradicting any exact records, notwithstanding all the airs of arithmetical authority, the frowns of figures, and the severities of sectional statistics.

Believe me, dear sir, yours most faithfully, *in Æsculapio*,

BENNET DOWLER.

New Orleans, Oct. 21st, 1850.

---

*July, 1844.